

To: Heads of Department/Section, Executive Deans,  
HSLOs and DHSOs, Faculty Managers

For Information

## Consultation: Draft Legionella Management Policy and Plan (Comments requested by 16 January 2016)

We are currently consulting on a new University Legionella Policy and Management Plan. It sets out responsibilities and processes for managing the risk of Legionnaires Disease, a potentially fatal form of pneumonia that can be contracted by breathing in aerosols of water containing the Legionella Bacterium.

As a Head of Department / Section you have responsibilities under the draft Policy and Plan. This bulletin is to inform you and give you the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

For those of you who are not familiar with Legionella, there is a brief overview of Legionella and its control on the reverse of this bulletin.

The proposed Head of Department/Section responsibilities are given below, with an explanation of what you are required to do to meet the responsibility.

Responsibility	What this means
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the control of risks arising from Legionella, where it relates to activities and equipment that is outside of the "built environment". This includes stand-alone equipment holding or circulating water.</li> </ul>	<p>If your department owns equipment that holds or circulates water, you will need to check whether there is a legionella risk and, if so, implement suitable controls. Please speak to your lead health and safety adviser if you have such equipment and they will help you to determine what you need to do.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informing the Estate Management Section (EMS) of little used water outlets in your areas of responsibility</li> </ul>	<p>If you have sinks, showers or other water outlets, including plumbed-in eyewash stations and emergency showers, in your department that are used less than weekly then flushing is necessary to prevent legionella build up. You will need to inform EMS, so that a flushing system can be set up. Departments with many little used outlets may be given training to carry out flushing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting EMS in meeting its responsibilities in relation to management of Legionella risk in the management of the Estate.</li> </ul>	<p>EMS will need to regularly visit departments to carry out flushing, descaling and, where necessary, other remedial work. Your assistance may be needed in gaining access to affected water outlets.</p> <p>Additionally as stated above, departments may be asked to carry out flushing of their little used outlets.</p>

You may comment on the above or, if you prefer, the full Draft Legionella Policy and Management Plan, which is available from HSAS.

Please submit your comments to HSAS using [safety@essex.ac.uk](mailto:safety@essex.ac.uk) by **16 January 2016**.

## **About Legionella and its control**

Legionella bacteria occur naturally, but usually in low numbers. However if conditions are favourable, the bacteria may grow increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. It is therefore important to control the risks by introducing appropriate measures.

The risk from legionella increases if:

- The water temperature in all or some parts of the water system is between 20-45 °C, which is suitable for growth;
- it is possible for breathable water droplets to be created and dispersed e.g. aerosols created by water outlets;
- water is stored and/or re-circulated;
- there are deposits that can support bacterial growth by providing a source of nutrients for the organism, e.g. rust, sludge, scale, organic matter and biofilms.

Common methods of controlling risk in hot and cold water systems are by maintaining water temperatures so that they are outside the above range, regular descaling and flushing little used water outlets to ensure water cannot stagnate. Regular monitoring is needed to ensure these control measures are effective.